



State of Tennessee
Department of State
Tennessee State Library and Archives
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**DEPARTMENT OF LABOR
RECORDS
1878-1974**

RECORD GROUP 72

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Archival Technical Services

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SCOPE AND CONTENT

The Tennessee Department of Labor was established in 1923 as a part of the executive branch of government. The purpose behind its establishment was, and remains today, to protect the working man and woman of Tennessee and to promote their health, safety and economic welfare.

The Department of Labor is headed by a commissioner, who is appointed by the governor. Since the Commissioner of Labor is a cabinet official, he serves at the governors pleasure, usually for the term of the governor by whom he was appointed.

The Department of Labor is divided into eight parts; the research and statistical office, the codes section, the prevailing wage scale section, the division of occupational safety, the boiler and elevator inspection, the elevator inspection section, the division of workers compensation, and the division of mines.

Since the records in this group are exclusively in the area of the prevailing wage scale section and the division of mines, it is therefore necessary to inspect the purpose behind these two sections in more detail.

The prevailing wage scale section determines the wage scale paid on state projects. A three member commission supervises the regulations and administers the law.

The division of mines is responsible for the training and education of miners, mine owners and operators in the areas of safety, first aid, and rescue techniques.

The records that involve the prevailing wage scale section consist mainly of cost estimates for various building projects throughout the state. Of particular interest are the pay scales for various crafts in the late 1960's and early 1970's. These records also contain information on state building projects in specific counties.

List of contractors, detailed information on specific projects, as well as information and complaints are often included.

The bulk of the record group consists of documents from the division of mines. These documents are divided into two areas; records and maps.

The records from the division of mines are incomplete. They begin about 1940 and end about 1948. There are no records for the years 1942-1947.

Of specific interest is the annual mine reports, injury and fatality reports, mine inspector's itineraries and reports, and foreman examinations. Other areas of interest include a report on the 1902 Fraterville Mine explosion, reports and complaints and strike violence reports. The maps from the division of mines consist of blueprints of coal mines. The maps are dated from approximately 1935 to about 1960. There are a few dated in the 1920's and at least one mine date 1878.

The maps ten to be large, detailed and highly technical. In addition, there are a number of these maps that show the same mine a few months apart with only minor variations. A few of these maps fail to give important information, such as scale, date of the map or specific location of the mine.

A map of special interest is the Victoria Mine map, dating from 1878. Others include the duplicate maps showing monthly change. Another area of interest is the maps showing the specific seams of coal.

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